

National Women and Girl's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

March 10, 2015

(Hit Ctrl and click newsletter's highlighted words to open links)



RESOURCES

MD HIV Testing

Find sites by visiting gettested.cdc.gov.

You also can text your local ZIP code to KNOWIT (566948) for a site near you. Or call the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene at 410-767-5132.

Free Educational Materials for Maryland Agencies

Call the Materials Distribution Center at 410-799-1940 or call the Infectious Disease Bureau at 800-358-9001.

800-CDC-INFO
(800-232-4636)
TTY: (888) 232-6348

2006-2015: Women's HIV/AIDS Milestones

The past decade has included significant milestones involving women and HIV/AIDS:

- **2006** — The first annual [National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#) in the United States was observed.
- **2012** — The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) launched Take Charge. Take the Test™, a national social marketing campaign that focuses on increasing HIV testing and decreasing HIV infections among heterosexual African-American women ages 18 to 34.
- **2013** — AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth and Families worked with the Office on Women's Health and Medicare Part D providers to share best practices in delivering primary and specialty medical care and supportive services to women over 50 living with HIV/AIDS.
- **2014** — Under the Affordable Care Act, new health plans offered HIV screenings without cost-sharing.
- The U.S. Public Health Service released the first comprehensive clinical practice guidelines for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
- **2015** — Women are living longer with HIV. Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy ([HAART](#)) medications taken as directed for HIV can suppress the virus. Pre-exposure prophylaxis ([PrEP](#)) is used by people who do not have HIV, to help reduce the transmission of the virus.

Get Tested: Ida's story

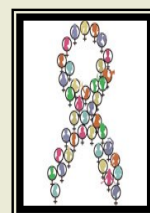
The CDC estimates that 4,900 people in Maryland have HIV and are unaware of their status. Women and girls 13 years of age and older should be tested for HIV.

Sex workers, homeless women, transgender women, drug abusers, victims of sexual abuse, women experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual

violence, or women and girls whose male sexual partners have concurrent MSM experiences may unknowingly have HIV.

The only sure way to know your status is to get tested.

Click here for [Ida's Story](#).



7 ways STDs impact women differently from men

Here are some ways that sexually transmitted diseases affect women differently from men:

1. A woman's anatomy can place her at a unique risk for STD infection, compared with a man's.
2. Women are less likely to have symptoms of common STDs.
3. Women are more likely to confuse symptoms of an STD for something else.
4. Women may not see symptoms as easily as men.
5. STDs can lead to serious health complications and affect a woman's future reproductive plans.
6. Women who are pregnant can pass STDs to their babies.
7. Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted disease in women,

and is the main cause of cervical cancer.



The Good News ...

While women may be exposed to risks, they typically see their doctors more often than men do.

Women should use this time with their doctor as an opportunity to ask about STD testing, which may not be part their annual exam.

For example, the Pap test which only screens for cervical

cancer, does not test for STDs. It is important that women reflect on their sexual history if they are considering STD testing, since oral and anal sex can also expose women to STDs and HIV.

Women can also inquire about other STD-prevention methods. There is a [vaccine to prevent HPV](#). Treatments for other STDs can prevent serious health consequences, such as infertility, if diagnosed and treated early.

Resources are available for women to learn more about actions they can take to protect themselves and their partners from STDs.

Call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) for resources. You also can find more information about women's health at www.womenshealth.gov and at [the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](http://the.MarylandDepartmentofHealthandMentalHygiene).

Pathway to an HIV-free generation starts with prevention, testing and care for the

Marylanders can achieve an HIV-free generation if they improve prevention and the [continuum of care](#).

Detection of an HIV infection is crucial. Early HIV testing and diagno-

sis are important for all Marylanders who are 13 years of age and older.

A person with a positive HIV diagnosis should be linked to a health care provider, should obtain appropriate

care and should be retained in care, adhering to treatment that will suppress the virus.

Clinical success is achieved when there is no detectable HIV [viral load](#).

Trending: Hope

The percentage of Americans with HIV who achieved viral suppression has remained roughly stable over the past few years.

www.AIDS.gov

10,807 women, girls living with HIV/AIDS in Md.

More than 1.2 million Americans are infected with HIV in the U.S. As of December 31, 2012, 30,061 Marylanders were diagnosed and living with the virus.

According to Maryland's surveillance data, 76 percent of the 29,533 adults or adolescents living with HIV or AIDS at the end of 2012 were African American, 16 percent were white, and 5 percent were Hispanic.



There were 10,807 women and girls living with HIV; 67 percent of the adult or adolescent women with HIV in Maryland were infected through heterosexual exposure, and 33 percent were exposed via injection drug use.

According to the Center for HIV Surveillance, Epidemiology and Evaluation, May 28, 2014 report, there are almost twice as many males with HIV as females (64.3 percent vs. 35.5 percent), and the proportion of new male HIV cases increased from 63 percent in 2007 to 73 percent in 2012.

To reduce risk, women must talk to their partners.

Women Helping Women: Programs provide support

In Maryland, Sisters Together and Reaching, Inc. (STAR) “seeks to enhance overall health and wellness of every person they engage.”

Light Health and Wellness (LIGHT) “offers three program areas designed to help children and families improve their physical health, emotional well-being and overall quality of life.”

Older Women Embracing Life (OWEL) “is an organized

network of senior women that provides support for women — many living with and all impacted by HIV/AIDS — as well as their families and care providers.”

Women Accepting Responsibility (WAR) focuses on working “exclusively with women in crisis and transition. ... to offer non-judgmental, compassionate, loving services, meeting each woman at her level of need without ques-

Act Against AIDS

To learn more about Act Against AIDS, visit www.cdc.gov/actagainstaids.



Look out for yourself and get an HIV test.

HIV awareness information for girls

1

Your risk of HIV is based on things you may not know – like your partner's sexual past. Be brave, ask questions, and get tested together.

2

Protect yourself by using a condom correctly every time you have vaginal, anal or oral sex and by avoiding contact with your partner's fluids or blood.

3

Need help getting tested? You may be able to get HIV and STD testing and counseling for free (thanks to the Affordable Care Act).

4

Tell your family, friends, and other people you love that you care about their health. Share the facts about HIV and why it is important to practice abstinence or to use condoms.

5

Help fight stigma by making sure people know you cannot get HIV from things like the air, toilet seats or hugs.

6

Avoid using alcohol and drugs. If you use alcohol and drugs, you may be more likely to take risks, like not using a condom.

7

Never share needles, syringes, or other injection equipment. Sharing these with an infected person can put you at greater risk of infection.

8

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) raise your risk of getting HIV. One out of four sexually active teenage girls has an STD. If you think you have an STD, see a doctor.

9

If you have questions, talk to a parent or another trusted adult. Do not be afraid to be open and honest with them about your concerns.

10

If you are HIV positive, you can live a longer, healthier life and help prevent HIV from progressing to AIDS. Make sure to eat healthy, to take your medicine, and to see your doctor.

This is a 2015 interactive National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day E-Newsletter for the [Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#), Prevention and Health Promotion Administration, Infectious Disease Bureau, Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships
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